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A METHOD OF EVALUATING WOMEN RESIDENT
ASSISTANTS' PERFORMANCE THROUGH THEIR
RECOGNIZED INTERACTIONS WITH RESIDENTS

(TITLE)

BY

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B. S. in Education

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS PLAN B PAPER BE ACCEPTED AS
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problem

The primary purpose of this investigation was to develop a summary of types of interactions the 1963-64 women resident assistants at Eastern Illinois University had with the residents in the women's halls. Through the summary compiled from resident assistants' views, a measure of self-appraisal and data for future resident assistant training discussion was developed.

Scope of Problem

Methods of differentiating student leaders from the general college population and evaluating their progress are sources of concern in every college. Several measuring devices have been developed to produce a profile of the typical student leader. Frequently, student leaders are evaluated through personality traits constant with the administrative construct of them. Such traits might include: achievement orientation, adjustment, confidence, dominance, extrovert qualities, responsibility, ingratiating qualities, capacity for status, self-assurance, social maturity, achievement via conformity, intellectual potential, and efficiency.¹

Similarly, the dormitory resident assistant (RA) is an administratively chosen and paid student leader selected to

¹Richard T. Johnson and Arden N. Frandsen, "The California Psychological Inventory Profile of Student Leaders," The Personnel and Guidance Journal, XLI (December, 1962), p. 343.

promote university policies and attitudes. As the direction of residence hall living becomes more and more student directed, it is reasonable to suggest that student appraisal of hall leaders also be delegated to the students. Definite measurement depends upon objective information. In residence halls the most productive source of such information is the students themselves.

The students participating in this 1963-64 study were Resident Assistants (RA's) at Eastern Illinois University, a college with an enrollment of approximately 4000 students. Each of the five women's residence halls had approximately 250 residents. Two resident assistants were assigned to each corridor of fifty girls to help run the residence hall and establish desirable attitudes and behavior among the residents.

Each hall had one Director qualified in the personnel field with a minimum of a Master's degree. The directors were responsible primarily for the operation and maintenance of their halls, to direct and counsel hall government and discipline, and to counsel individual students. They were directly responsible to an Assistant Dean of Women and the Dean of Women. Each director was allowed to fulfill the duties in her hall in her own personal way. Although uniformity was kept somewhat consistent through staff meetings, there were many different ways of accomplishing things in each hall.

Constitutions, activities, hall government, and RA training varied also from hall to hall. The director was responsible for RA's training program. Discussions were held once a week in each hall and the topics were up to the individual directors. There was no training through meetings for RA's until they were hired

with full status usually when they were juniors or seniors. However, there were apprenticeship duties for students, usually sophomores, who wished to become RA's. They took on some duties as working the switchboard but did not take on any responsibility for the duties of staffing and leadership as described in the RA manual and did not meet in groups for discussions.

At no time were meetings held for the whole campus group of RA's and there was no program of inter-visitation of meetings from hall to hall.

Two graduate assistants were members of the resident hall staff but did not have duties concerned with any training aspects. Their primary duty was to float from hall to hall to cover for directors when they had time off.

In an article in the National Education Association Journal, H. Gerthson Morgan states,

Evaluation reaches its highest level of significance in the individual's self-evaluation, a process by which one learns about himself and moves closer to self-acceptance. Group planning and practice should be such that self-evaluation is not only permitted but encouraged, planned for, and valued.²

This study was an effort to develop an evaluative plan or instrument with a student-oriented approach to self-appraisal. The resident assistants' views of what their relationship with residents should be were stressed rather than the personal qualities commonly measured. It was hoped that in this way personal inquiry items, as those listed in Scope of Problem, page 1, would be somewhat avoided, affording more objective

²H. Gerthson Morgan, "What is Effective Evaluation?", National Education Association Journal, Vol. 48, November, 1959, pp. 15-17.

responses. In effect, it provided a climate of supporting relationships, free from administrative threat of criticism and dominance.

To develop this thesis, personal interviews were arranged with half of the RA group in their rooms. The group was equally proportioned throughout the five women's residence halls. The types and varieties of interactions they had with residents were determined for this year, 1963-64. The inquiry was limited to RA's with at least two quarters of experience, including any qualified, but not presently employed.

When the RA's views were developed through the interviews, they were summarized and administered to each group of RA's in their respective halls. Evaluated results were reported in terms of most and least valuable items chosen by the RA group and the estimated frequencies of their various interactions with residents. Ultimately, the RA's as a group, will have recognized their interactions with residents. It should provide one measure of their thinking and performance as a group. It was recognized that no one evaluative plan would be sufficient within itself. Nor could one single plan be used profitably for all.

Limitations

Had this evaluative study been constructed in a series of group meetings with RA's, several modifications might have resulted. The primary need was to narrow the breath of the instrument. Although the RA's participating in this investigation were most cooperative, the administration of the questionnaire was too long a process.

More time should have been spent in meeting and discussing the construction of the evaluation process with the RA's. Also, it would have been a good experience for the RA's to have helped compute the tallies.

Although the sampling was small, a group of thirty-five, the purpose of local evaluation was accomplished. On a larger scale or upon comparison to similar studies the sampling might be inadequate for reliable comparisons. Factors including past experience, formal training, size of the institution, kinds and size of dormitories, and geographic location would affect the reliability of the findings.

Had the study been more precisely structured it could have been compared to a similar study. In making another evaluation the writer would attempt to find similar studies to pattern the investigation after for ease in making a comparison.

Definitions

RA's - Resident assistants at Eastern Illinois University.

Those students who apply and are chosen by the Dean of Women and Directors to help run the residence halls and establish desirable attitudes and behavior among the residents.

Residents - All students including hall officers who reside in the dormitory other than the RA's.

Resident Replacements - Those students who apply and are chosen by the Dean of Women and Directors to work without pay toward being an RA. They may do some of the duties of an RA but do not assume responsibility for them.

'All Group Training' - University training or orientation given to RA's as a group before they are separated and assigned

to halls. At Eastern Illinois University this kind of training began in 1963-64 with the Resident Replacements.

'Grade Point Average' - Academic standing based on a 4 point system. The number of grade points for a grade in a given course is found by multiplying the grade point value by the number of grade points earned in all courses taken at Eastern Illinois University. The cumulative grade point average is computed by dividing the total number of grade points earned in all courses by the total number of quarter hours represented by those courses. A cumulative grade point average of 2.3 would approximate a middle C average.

'Interactions' - The term used to indicate that communication and inter-personal relationships were being created and maintained between RA's and residents.

CHAPTER II

RELATED RESEARCH

University of Texas

A study was developed at the University of Texas in 1959 to develop a test battery to aid in the selection of student counselors and to explore differences in perceptions of the student counselor's role by: a) administrative officers, b) head residents, c) dormitory residents, and d) the student counselors, themselves.

The CPB, Counselor Perception Blank, was administered to the administrative officers, head residents, dormitory residents, and student counselors. The CPB measured needs for achievement, autonomy, exhibition, dominance, intraception, and nurturance in student counselors.

The results indicated that supervisors and residents valued ambition, skill, and tangible success more than the student counselors in whom these traits were sought. In the area of intraception, residents did not want to be understood as much as student counselors and administrators felt they should be. Autonomy and exhibition were least valued by the student counselors, highly valued by the administrators, and moderately valued by residents.

In summary, autonomy and exhibitionism were satisfactorily in practice by student counselors. Dominance and achievement were acceptably practiced and noted of high value to residents. This

indication, that residents have reservations concerning competencies of student counselors to handle their problems, was cause for concern. The views of residents reflected their attitudes toward student counselors.¹

The CACL, Counseling Appropriateness Check List, was administered to residents to determine the appropriateness of four problem areas: 1) college routine, 2) vocational choice, 3) dormitory living, and 4) adjustment to self and others. All those who regarded their student counselors highly tended to rate 'all' problem areas more appropriate for discussion with them. It was concluded that 'groups' scored higher on the CACL who had the most effective student counselors.

"Obviously, the student counselor's perception of her role is influenced by training, accounting for differences between residents and student counselors and their similarity to supervisors. In some respects, then, the training program has failed to take into account the perceptions and expectancies of its dormitory resident clientele."²

Utah State

The California Psychological Inventory Profile of Student Leaders was developed at Utah State in 1959. The CPI should differentiate student leaders and produce a profile of personality traits of leaders consistent with administrative norms. The study compared fifty student presidents of various college organizations with fifty random sample freshmen. The four groups of

¹George G. Gonyea and Roy E. Warman, "Differential Perceptions of the Student Counselor's Role," The Personnel and Guidance Journal, XLI (December, 1962), p. 352.

²Ibid., p. 353.

scales measured were self assurance, social maturity and responsibility, achievement potential, and intellectual attitudes.³

This study is illustrative of evaluation and selection dominated by college administrative officers. However, it is a constructive effort to assure the choice of a group of potential student leaders. It is significant in that it is the only measuring device this writer found available precisely for measuring student leaders.

State University of Iowa

A study was made at the State University of Iowa in 1960 to investigate the status of student, parent, and student personnel worker's attitudes toward a range of university disciplinary situations and to compare and contrast the obtained attitudes with actual practice. The investigation was designed as a status study, but it could have been employed as an evaluative experiment. The conclusion showed college personnel workers to be more punitive than both students and parents. The outcomes of this study tend to support the need for greater student involvement in disciplinary processes and policy formation.⁴

U. S. Office of Education

The authors of this investigation represented the U.S. Office of Education in Washington and the State University of Iowa, respectively. They received data from thirteen agencies which included a record of seventy-seven studies pertaining to

³Johnson, op. cit., p. 343.

⁴Ralph E. Prusok, "Student, Student Personnel Worker, and Parent Attitudes Toward Student Discipline," The Personnel and Guidance Journal, XL (November, 1961), p. 253.

students or student personnel services.*

This survey supports the contention of many that student personnel workers are neglecting their research responsibilities. While 16% of the studies dealt directly with student personnel service programs, little was written in the areas of administration, housing, and student activities. The majority of studies were directly or indirectly related to counseling services.⁵

Suggested problem areas were recommended for study indicating the need for evaluation of the effects of new housing, the results of experiences in programs where students have self-government, and differences in behavior, attitudes and achievement of students residing in dormitories and students living in private housing or at home, among others.

From these agencies only five studies were made concerning special student groups which might include the resident assistant group. These research findings were estimated from research developed in 1961.

Summary

E. G. Williamson supports the idea of freedom of expression among students. He states that, "some student personnel workers, and especially some deans of students, have too long played the

* Centers and agencies contacted: National Institute of Mental Health, National Science Foundation, U.S. Office of Education, New England Board of Higher Education, Southern Regional Education Board, Western Interstate Commission of High Education, University of California, Berkley, National Merit Scholarship Corp., University of Michigan, Florida State, Columbia University, University of Texas, and Western Personnel Institute at Pasadena.

⁵ Donald W. Robinson and Dirck W. Brown, "A Report on Student and Student Personnel Research Activities," Personnel and Guidance Journal, XL (December, 1961), pp. 358-60.

role of suppressors of freedom of expressions."⁶ He recommends the simple proposition of re-examining and redefining the liberties which are conducive to full development of students. These liberties consist of two rights: 1) students are political citizens of the state and 2) students are participants in a developmental-learning experience.

Personnel workers are faced with the exploration of aiding maturing students to learn how to exercise their formally defined freedoms through freedom of expression, freedom of examination, and freedom of inquiry with regard to restrictions within a seminar situation. Williamson expresses a need for partnership with students. Students may voice their opinions, but few institutions have involved students in the formal definition and evaluation of their freedoms.⁷

"We are now at the beginning sessions of continuing seminars in which both students and staff proceed in an orderly manner to delineate, define, and adopt both regulations that are permissive and restrictive, to the end that many more students will progress toward that maturity of self-regulation - a most precious 'rule of law' firmly embedded in democracy's colleges and universities."⁸

A government publication describing research in school and college personnel services was published in 1958.⁹ The 1961

⁶E. G. Williamson, "Student Personnel Workers' Responsibility for Students' Expression on Social Issues," The Personnel and Guidance Journal, XL (October, 1961), p. 123.

⁷Ibid., p. 124.

⁸Ibid., p. 128.

⁹R. MacMinn, C. H. Miller, and F. E. Wellman, Research in School and College Personnel Services, U.S. Dept. Of Health Education and Welfare No. OE-25077 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, September, 1956-58).

report in the December issue of The Personnel and Guidance Journal, previously mentioned, also indicates that little was in the process of being studied at that time. Work supporting student expression and evaluation in their government has been found by this writer to be scarce and primarily limited to periodical publications. The writer found only one investigation which approached resident assistant self-appraisal. It was too different in scope and administration to effectively compare to this study. However, it was hoped that some similar conclusions might result indicating that it is feasible to encourage students to devise several methods for establishing ultimately, their own evaluations.

CHAPTER III

METHOD AND TREATMENT OF DATA

Selection of Population

A. Group A. The RA's individually interviewed were selected on the following general factors to assure similarity of sampling:

1) One RA was asked to volunteer from each corridor in the five dormitories.

2) Four RA's represented a consensus of thought for each dormitory. The total of twenty RA's represented half the RA's presently employed. It was believed that this representation would adequately reflect the ideas and training differences in each hall.

B. Group B. The RA's completing the composed evaluative instrument included all those presently employed and formerly employed now living in the residence halls. The following criteria should assure similarity of sampling:

1) All RA's had no 'all group training'* previous to employment or during employment.

2) All RA's had at least two quarters of experience with full RA status.

3) All RA's had qualities as required for university selection which include:

a) Cumulative grade point average* of 2.3 or

* 'all group training' - defined in Definitions, Chapter I.

* 'grade point average' - defined in Definitions, Chapter I.

higher.

b) Be a senior or junior and occasionally a sophomore.

c) Complete three acceptable evaluative interviews with college administrative personnel workers.

d) Have been recommended by three people in student personnel for the position.

e) Have served at least one quarter as a resident replacement*.

Planning the Interview

An individual interview procedure was employed with Group A to establish the outline, content, and scoring mechanism of the evaluative instrument. The interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the volunteer RA's, but were completed within a three week period. The outline and content resulted from the following lead questions:

1) What kind of interactions, meetings, and communications do RA's have with residents?

2) What items do RA's think about or experience in the areas outlined from question 1)?

3) How will the items be answered in questionnaire form?

The summary of kinds of interactions and items according to the experiences of the RA's interviewed, were assimilated by the writer. Exact duplications were eliminated, but resulting items were retained in the exact context as the RA's dictated. A method of scoring and tallying results was recorded for each area of

* Resident replacement - defined in Definitions, Chapter II.

interactions.

Before application with Group B, the instrument was reviewed and approved by the Dean of Women and each residence hall Director. Any alterations recommended were made at this time.

Application of the instrument with Group B was arranged with each hall Director. The following standards were held constant:

- 1) The questionnaire was answered in a group session in quiet, non-disturbed quarters.
- 2) All group meetings were scheduled within a week's time at the convenience of each dormitory group and Director.
- 3) Each RA completed the instrument independently.

Administration of Questionnaire

The data from the evaluative questionnaire was tallied and tabled according to the areas determined by the Group A interviews. The results were compared with the duties and responsibilities stated for RA's in the RA Manual printed by the university. The comparison denoted frequently tallied relationships between actual RA activities and those proposed activities by the university. Negative relationships might have been due to:

- 1) non-acceptance of some objectives set by the university by the RA group because of peer group pressures to conform and be loyal to the student group on some issues. A reflection of this loyalty was demonstrated in all student support for various college newspaper writings which criticized the administration throughout the year.

- 2) oversight or negligence of some objectives set by the university for the RA group by the administration.

3) a difference in presentation of objectives from hall to hall.

Essentially, the question was, is there significant indication of fulfillment of university recommended objectives for duties and responsibilities of RA's from the evaluative instrument and its tallies?

A concise interpretation of the duties and responsibilities recommended in the RA Manual at Eastern Illinois University in 1963-64 included:

- 1) A professional attitude toward their work.
- 2) To understand and accept residents.
- 3) To promote attitudes and behavior consistent with the standards of the university.
- 4) To cooperate with the Director.
 - a) exchange ideas.
 - b) discuss welfare of residents.
 - c) maintain approachable friendly attitudes and relationships with the residents.
 - d) keep the hall staffed at all times.
- 5) To be reasonably available to and maintain active relationships with the residents of their corridor.
- 6) To relate university information to residents in a manner consistent with constructive responses on the part of residents.
- 7) To attend all meetings scheduled by the Director, Dean of Women, and Hall Chairman.
- 8) To perform specific hall duties:
 - a) staffing.
 - b) desk duty.
 - c) reports as directed.
 - d) open & close the hall.

e) special assignments by Director.

f) emergency regulations

Further interpretation included data for the following questions:

- 1) In what areas do the RA's rate themselves strongest?
- 2) Which areas have the highest consensus of opinion and why?
- 3) Is there any significance in the items tallied indicating strong group agreement? or disagreement?
- 4) Of what value are the tallies for future RA group discussions?
- 5) Of what value are the tallies for the Directors and the Dean of Women?

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The interviews with Group A, the representative portion of the RA group, resulted in listings of several questions and answers for investigation. An outline and form was established by recording all items according to the experience of the twenty RA's interviewed in answer to eight interaction areas. Each RA spent a minimum of one hour in an interview session reviewing and expanding the items. The following eight areas of interactions were outlined:

- 1) What subjects or topics do RA's talk about with residents?
- 2) Where do RA's meet with residents most frequently?
- 3) What means of communication are employed in communicating with residents?
- 4) What incidents should RA's report to the Director?
- 5) What individual methods are best for keeping in touch with residents?
- 6) What individual methods are best for promoting desirable attitudes and university regulations?
- 7) What are the policies in each dormitory which permit the RA's to be available and accessible to residents?
- 8) What are the structured policies in each dormitory which encourage and provide meetings between RA's and residents?

The number of items contributed for each interaction question were synthesized as follows: 1) 40 items, 2) 30 items,

3) 6 items, 4) 14 items, 5) 29 items, 6) 27 items, 7) 14 items, and 8) 17 items.

After developing the areas of interactions, a method of interpreting each area was developed.

Question 1) - Ten choices were allowed to discover the topics most frequently discussed with residents. Five additional choices were made to determine the topics evaluated as the best for discussion with residents in establishing rapport and a good personal relationship.

With a total of forty items to choose from, it was decided that ten items would provide a scattering of topic areas and the five choices would limit the scatter. The five choices would limit the RA to choosing answers which dealt with five similar kinds of conversation or vice versa. Also, it was recommended that items chosen in respect to frequency in the RA's experience be compared to those the RA's chose as being most valuable.

Question 2) - Five choices of thirty items were advised to gain results with either a wide scatter of group experiences or a smaller scatter indicating a similarity in the group's experiences.

Question 3) - The method determined for this area was ranking the order of the six items twice. A comparison was recommended to determine if the means of communication experienced by the RA's and the means thought to be most valuable by the RA's compared or contrasted.

Question 4) - It was decided to select the three best choices to determine the similarity of judgment about reporting incidents to the Director.

Question 5) - From thirty items, ten choices of methods most valuable to use in maintaining active relationships with residents, were suggested as giving an indication of group thinking.

Question 6) - The five most valuable and the five least valuable choices were recommended to be selected from twenty-seven methods of promoting desirable attitudes and university policies. The results might help to determine if there are any significant differences in ways of promoting such policies.

Question 7) - Selecting five best choices was decided to determine the most effective dormitory policies by which RA's could be more available and accessible to residents. An opportunity to not disagree or choose least desirable policies was allowed.

Question 8) - It was resolved that five most frequently structured meetings in the RA's experience be selected to gain a summary of how RA's view structured policies proposed by the Director and university to provide interaction between RA's and residents. It was also resolved to make five choices of policies RA's believe most and least valuable. A comparison of the three tallies was recommended to relate personal reactions to the policies.

In administering the instrument, the method for recording answers was determined to be a check (✓), a star (★), and a zero (0) as directed in the instructions for each interaction area.

The instrument was administered in group sessions in each dormitory. Two girls were permitted to take it separately from

the group, but together, because of conflicting appointments.

Descriptions and Results

When the topics most frequently discussed were considered, ten topics were determined by the RA's as being the most frequently discussed in their experiences with residents. Table 1 lists the topics in order of the items most frequently selected. The number of RA's and the per cent of the group responding to each of the ten items is also recorded. Thirty-four of the group of thirty-five RA's completed this portion of the instrument correctly.

Over 50% of the group selected boyfriends, what professors to take, and marriage (items 38, 1, & 27) as most frequent topics of conversation with residents. The remaining topics ranked below 50%. However, they all ranged within a 40% representation of the group indicating little variance in the total group's response.

At the 47% level two items with an equal weight of responses appeared; roommate problems and sex (item 26 & 35). At the 44% level, three equally weighted responses occurred (items 23, 17, & 34), cafeteria gripes, parents and family, and the future. Two responses were equally weighted at the 40% level, Greek organizations and problems in course scheduling (items 6 & 16).

The RA's further chose five topics which they evaluated as being the most valuable in establishing good personal relationships with residents. Their responses were recorded in Table 2 in the same manner of presentations as Table 1. Item 34, the future, received a 50% response by the group. The remaining items received responses of 47%, 38%, 35%, and 32% respectively.

TABLE 1

TOPICS CHOSEN BY RA'S AS THE 10 MOST FREQUENTLY
DISCUSSED IN THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH RESIDENTS

Total Choices	Number of Item	Item Content	Group of thirty-four N	RA's %
1.	38	Boyfriends and dates	23	.67
2.	1	What professors to take	20	.59
3.	27	Marriage	17	.50
4.	26	Roommate Problems	16	.47
5.	35	Sex	16	.47
6.	23	Cafeteria gripes	15	.44
7.	17	Parents and family	15	.44
8.	34	The future	15	.44
9.	16	Greek organizations	14	.40
10.	6	Problems with course scheduling	14	.40

TABLE 2

TOPICS CHOSEN BY RA'S AS THE 5 MOST VALUABLE IN
ESTABLISHING A GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP
WITH RESIDENTS

Total Choices	Number of Item	Item Content	Group of thirty-four N	RA's %
1.	34	The future	17	.50
2.	19	Values and beliefs	16	.47
3.	11	Personality pro- blems and get- ting along with others	13	.38
4.	17	Parents and family	12	.35
5.	32	Past life	11	.32

Items 34 & 17, the future and parents and family, were selected as ranking fourth in the RA's experience with residents as indicated in Table 1. The two items also appeared as valuable in establishing a good personal relationship in Table 2. The remaining items in Table 2 did not correspond with findings in Table 1. Values and beliefs, personality problems, and past life (items 19, 11, & 32) were chosen "most valuable" but did not appear in the frequency findings. All five responses in Table 2 dealt directly with the resident's personal life and beliefs. Therefore, it was indicated that RA's desired to know residents in a personal way to establish good relationships which contrasted somewhat with their actual experiences of topics communicated with them.

The results of the tallies in Table 3, considering most frequent meeting places RA's have with residents, revealed little variance in responses. Items 1, 16, and 9 - the RA's room, the resident's room, and desk duty - ranked above 50% in group responses. Eighty-six percent of the RA's checked that the most frequent meeting place was their room, indicating that residents visited RA's rooms frequently. The most frequent meetings all occurred within the residence hall.

Seven meeting places including dances, concerts, church, library, tennis courts, going home together, and during and after fire drills were never selected. Six meeting places, including breakfast, classes, hall meetings, public entertaining spots, union snack bar, and chance meetings all about the campus were each selected once.

When considering means of communicating with residents

TABLE 3
PLACES WHERE RA'S HAVE THEIR MOST
FREQUENT MEETINGS WITH RESIDENTS

Total Choices	Number of Item	Item Content	Group of thirty-five RA's N	%
1.	1	RA's room	30	.86
2.	16	Resident's Room	23	.66
3.	9	Desk Duty	18	.51
4.	22	Bath & Shower	15	.43
5.	7	Lounge	11	.32

it was possible to develop six basic approaches. These included the accidental individual approach, the accidental group approach, the planned individual approach--with and without topics for discussion--and the planned group approach--with and without topics for discussion.

A wide variance in responses was indicated by the representative percentages in Table 4. There was a bare majority of agreement that most means were equally valuable and frequent. That is, the most frequently experienced means of communication were also judged as being the most valuable and best means of communicating ideas.

Sixty per cent of the group agreed that the accidental individual approach with no planned topic was most useful in their experience and a majority of twenty-six per cent responded that it was also most valuable. The twenty-six per cent figure revealed a wide variance in group opinion on this item. Similar results occurred with the second choice, the accidental group meeting with no topic, as a "gab session." Forty-nine per cent found it to be most frequently experienced and twenty-nine per cent found it to be most valuable. Both were majority tallies, however, the low percentages indicated a wide variance of group thinking. More group agreement occurred in choices 3, 4, 5, and 6, but relatively low percentages still indicated a wide variance in group thinking. The percentages indicated a closer relationship of group thinking between what was most frequently experienced and what was thought to be most valuable.

In table 4, ranked choices 4 and 5 were chosen in reverse order in each section of the table. This dissimilarity did not distort the resulting indication that basically non-structured

TABLE 4

A COMPARISON OF FREQUENT AND MOST VALUABLE MEANS FOR
RA'S TO COMMUNICATE WITH RESIDENTS

Most Frequently Experienced					Thought Most Valuable				
Ranked Choice	Approach	Topic or No Topic	Group of 35 RA's N	%	Ranked Choice	Approach	Topic or No Topic	Group of 35 RA's N	%
1	Accidental Individual	Topic	21	.60	1	Accidental Individual	None	9	.26
2	Accidental Group	None	17	.49	2	Accidental Group	None	10	.29
3	Planned Individual	Topic	15	.43	3	Planned Individual	Topic	15	.43
4	Planned Group	None	12	.34	4	Planned Individual	None	12	.34
5	Planned Individual	None	9	.26	5	Planned Group	None	10	.29
6	Planned Group	Topic	16	.46	6	Planned Group	Topic	13	.37

means of communicating with residents both occurred most frequently and were preferred to structured meetings which included topics for discussion as might typically occur in hall and corridor meetings.

No table was constructed for the tallies concerning the three best policies for reporting incidents concerning residents to the Director. The three choices selected were items 12, 4, and 14 as follows: (Appendix IV)

12. I would report major disciplinary problems and personality conflicts on the corridor. I would not feel it necessary to report minor incidents unless they might apply to something more serious. I do not feel the girls have to know what is discussed between the Director and resident assistant.
4. I tell the Director everything I think it is important for her to know. This makes it a matter of personal judgment, and sometimes it is hard to decide what to do. I do not feel that the Director needs to be told of every little squabble and personal problem on a corridor.
14. I would report incidents to the Director when I felt my methods were ineffective. I feel that the Director should keep close contact with the resident assistant, relating developments about certain cases or problems to maintain and promote the feeling of usefulness in the resident assistant.

Results were representative of about one-half of the group of thirty-four RA's correctly completing this item. The percentages of responses, in the order listed above, were 53%, 50%, and 44%. More variance of responses might have been expected because the items were quite similar and hard to differentiate.

The essential ideas chosen by RA's suggested the following data: 1) Reporting incidents is a matter of personal judgment for the RA to decide. 2) Major disciplinary problems and personality conflicts should be reported. 3) Residents do not necessarily have to know what is discussed between the RA and

the Director. 4) Incidents should be reported to the Director when the RA's methods have failed to alleviate the problem. 5) The Director should follow up reports made by RA's with developments, if possible, to promote the RA's feeling of usefulness.

The results of analysis of the data concerning ways RA's would prefer to keep in touch with residents are shown in Table 5. This evaluation had the highest consensus of group opinion. Eight of the eleven choices ranked above fifty per cent in group agreement. Ten selections were originally planned from twenty-nine very divergent, but constructive, items. All but two in the group of thirty-four RA's felt it was most important to speak to residents whenever possible and to never hesitate to be the first to strike a greeting or conversation.

Twenty-seven considered giving compliments, when possible, valuable for establishing rapport. It was added that compliments should never be made unless they were truly sincere. Twenty-six considered calling everyone by name when initiating conversation as most important. This demonstrated the carry over of this attitude from the group training discussion in each hall.

Choices 4 and 5 received an equal number of responses. These were taking advantage of desk duty opportunities for conversation and letting residents know continually that the RA's door is always open for help and information. This supported the value of having RA's work desk duty. Choices 6 and 7 also received an equal number of responses. It was considered important to establish a personal relationship by writing a note to new students on each RA's corridor, and, secondly, referring

TABLE 5

MOST VALUABLE WAYS RA'S WOULD LIKE
TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH RESIDENTS

Total Choices	Number of Item	Item Content	Group of N	Thirty-four RA's &
1.	13	Speak to residents whenever possible. Don't hesitate to be the one to speak first.	32	.94
2.	20	Give compliments sincerely when possible.	27	.79
3.	14	Call everyone by name.	26	.76
4.	8	Take advantage of conversations initiated when on desk duty.	24	.71
5.	16	Let all know that your door is always open to them.	24	.71
6.	17	Write a welcome note to new students during the summer.	18	.53
7.	7	Refer to personal life in conversation.	18	.53
8.	26	Always ask, "How was your weekend?"	17	.50
9.	23	Seek information as a means for initia- ting conversation and visits.	13	.38
10.	6	Visit each room on your corridor at least once per month.	10	.29
11.	4	Be jolly in the bath and shower rooms	10	.29

to personal items concerning the resident's life in conversation, as they seem most interested in talking about themselves.

An eleventh choice was recorded as it received an equal number of responses at the tenth item level. RA's noted the bath and shower rooms as being a frequent place of conversing with residents as reported in Table 3. A concern for conversation here was considered, as shown in Table 5. It was implied that sometimes it is hard to feel "jolly" early in the morning when the "gang" meets to ready for the day in the shower and bath rooms. The RA's were conscious of being "jolly" at these times.

Table 6 contains a summary of the results of how RA's would most like to promote the ideas they have learned to present as RA's. A differentiation was made to determine the least desirable methods employed, also.

Although group consensus was not above fifty per cent on all items, it was consistent from most to least valuable results. Choices 1 and 2 in both sections of Table 6 represent a majority of responses. The RA's agreed that being a good example and being a good listener were the most desirable ways of establishing healthy and conformed behavior among residents. They agreed that to paint a picture of RA's as counselors and to promote attitudes indirectly through influencing residents' friends were relatively undesirable means for establishing a firm ground for promoting attitudes.

It was also found that there was a very small number of RA's supporting the least valued outcomes. The supporting tallies were as follows: item 15--one vote, item 9--two votes,

TABLE 6

MOST VALUABLE AND LEAST VALUABLE WAYS RA'S SHOULD ENCOURAGE
UNIVERSITY PROMOTED ATTITUDES AND POLICIES

MOST VALUABLE					LEAST VALUABLE				
Total Choices	Items N	Item Content	Group of 34 RA's N	%	Total Choices	Items N	Item Content	Group of 34 RA's N	%
1.	1	Be an example. Reflect desirable attitudes and behavior.	27	.79	1.	15	Promote attitudes indirectly through friends of residents.	22	.65
2.	22	Be a good listener in all situations.	18	.53	2.	9	Encourage residents to confide in you as a counselor.	17	.50
3.	3	Show respectful attitude toward Director	13	.38	3.	11	Wait to present policies when a "Teachable Moment" occurs.	13	.38
4.	4	Be accepting, tolerant, and practice what you preach.	13	.38	4.	23	Provide little extras*.	13	.38
5.	6	State policies as simple as possible. Always explain the "why" behind each one.	13	.38	5.	14	Report repeated offenses to student first and then to Standards Council.	12	.35

*Extras--Keeping a list at desk for people who want babysitting jobs.
 Keeping a list at desk of forwarding addresses of former residents.
 Keeping a list of mailbox combinations handy for girls who forget theirs.

and item 11--five votes. Items 23 and 14 received no votes.
(Appendix - p. 50)

Each dormitory had unique policies which cause the RA's to be available and accessible to residents. At Eastern Illinois University, these policies may be developed and agreed upon by the Director and RA's as a group. Table 7 contains a summary of responses concerning the five most useful policies as chosen by the RA's. The results tended to agree with the policies which were generally accepted in a number of the dormitories.

Of the thirty-four RA's, seventy-four per cent selected items 13 and 14 as being the most useful dormitory policies. They included the responsibility of staffing the hall or 'coverage' being assumed by the RA and a recommended calm, confident manner to maintain an approachable image. It was agreed that RA's are mature enough individuals to be responsible for their own coverage and not be subjected to regulated systems and schedules. They supported a calm, confident manner in all situations as opposed to a tense, excitable manner to encourage approachability.

Having sign-out cards to check informally and to assume responsibility for coverage was supported by seventy-one per cent of the group.

The RA's were requested not to choose any least desirable policies unless they absolutely disagreed with them. The results indicated that eleven of the fourteen items were definitely disagreed with by RA's. As indicated by Table 7, the disagreements did not occur in conjunction with the five most useful selections. The scattered disagreement might have resulted from RA's not being familiar with policies outside their own

TABLE 7

MOST USEFUL POLICIES WHICH CAUSE RA'S TO BE AVAILABLE
AND ACCESSIBLE TO RESIDENTS WITH THE NUMBER AND
PERCENT OF RA'S DISAGREEING WITH THE
SELECTED POLICIES

Total Choices	Number of Item	Item Content	Group of Thirty-four RA's			
			Agreed		Disagreed	
			N	%	N	%
1.	13	It should be up to the RA's to assume the responsibility of staffing. RA's should not need systems or schedules of coverage.	25	.74	1	.03
2.	14	A calm, confident manner is recommended to encourage approachability.	25	.74	0	.00
3.	4	At night, sign-out cards grouped together show what RA's are available in the dormitory.	24	.71	0	.00
4.	1	One RA should sleep on each corridor at all times.	15	.44	3	.09
5.	9	An open door policy is recommended but not mandatory.	14	.41	0	.00

dormitory. A record of disagreements may be found in Table 9 in the Appendix - p. 54.

Some policies in a dormitory were specifically structured to afford interactions between RA's and residents. Table 8 shows the relationships among policies RA's selected as being experienced most often, as being most valuable, and as being least valuable. Five choices were made in each area from fourteen presently established policies at Eastern Illinois University.

The results of this portion of the instrument indicated:

- 1) There was a majority of agreement between most valuable policies and those most frequently experienced. (Items 7, 13, 14, and 4.)
- 2) The two items not having agreement in the "frequency" and "valuable" comparison (items 11 and 3) were not found in any of the least valuable selections.
- 3) None of the least valuable selections were found represented in frequent or valuable choices.
- 4) Least valuable choices received equally high and comparable percentages of responses indicating that the group as a whole were of similar thinking concerning most and least valuable choices.
- 5) Percentages revealed a high consistency of agreement among the three items.
- 6) All percentages revealed an above fifty per cent group representation with the exception of one forty per cent result for item 14 in the frequency tallies.
- 7) Of the thirty-five RA's completing the instrument, thirty successfully scored this section.

The content of the corresponding "most valuable" and "frequent" choices included items 7, 4, 13, and 14 as follows:

7. The RA should be constantly alert and on duty during welcome orientation week in the fall.

TABLE 8

MOST FREQUENTLY EXPERIENCED, MOST VALUABLE AND LEAST
VALUABLE STRUCTURED POLICIES WHICH AFFORD
INTERACTIONS BETWEEN RA'S
AND RESIDENTS

Total Choices	Item Numbers			Group of Thirty RA's					
	F.*	V.*	L.*	F.	N V.	L.	F. %	V.	L.
1.	7	7	1	20	21	20	.67	.70	.67
2.	4	3	16	19	18	20	.63	.60	.67
3.	13	14	6	18	17	18	.60	.57	.67
4.	11	13	2	17	16	16	.57	.53	.53
5.	14	4	10	12	15	16	.40	.50	.53

*Frequently Experienced--F.

*Most Valuable--V.

*Least Valuable--L.

4. The RA shall be a part of all corridor meetings.
13. The RA should check students in and out of the hall. Incoming students should be oriented and made to feel welcome and secure on her corridor and in the hall.
14. The RA should be an "information booth" for residents. This should be part of her image or role, and residents should be so informed.

Item 11 was considered a frequent experience as opposed to Item 3, which was selected as being more valuable. Item 11 states that RA's must sign all late leaves and overnights, and Item 3 states that RA's should visit ill students regularly.

The least valuable choices (1, 16, 6, 2, and 10) were in order of selection as follows:

1. Keys for rooms may not be checked out. An RA is found by the resident, and she unlocks her room for her. This brings the RA into contact with all those people who forget their keys. They might take the opportunity to chat with the resident at this time. Requests for keys to formal rooms and supply rooms would also apply.
16. The RA finds various contacts through closing the dorm in the evening. She should maintain a firm policy by calling the time three or four times in the last remaining minutes. Then if all residents are not in or their boyfriends are not all gone, hand out the late minute slips to them. Warn those who receive them, if you feel they warrant it.
6. RA's should give warnings for cafeteria and lounge violations.
2. RA's should bring sick trays for ill residents.
10. It is preferable that the RA's on the corridor of the resident, sign her overnights.

Summary

During several interview sessions with one-half of a RA group of thirty-five members, the instrument was outlined, devised, and expanded. The interviewed group, Group A, was

equally representative of each of the five women's residence halls at Eastern Illinois University.

The areas of interactions between RA's and residents included: 1) topics discussed, 2) places of discussion, 3) ways of communication, 4) incidents to report to the Director, 5) methods of keeping in touch with residents, 6) methods for promoting university regulations, 7) policies permitting approachability, and 8) policies which provide structured meetings.

Fifty per cent of Group B, the entire group of RA's, selected boyfriends, what professors to take, and marriage as most frequent topics of conversation with residents. The RA's also chose topics they thought were best for establishing good personal relationships. The results indicated that RA's desired to know residents in an intimate way which contrasted with the content of the topics most frequently discussed with them in daily experience. The topics recommended by RA's for discussion with residents were the future, values and beliefs, personality problems and getting along with others, parents and family, and past life,--which would usually be discussed only with close personal friends. This suggested that an effective personal relationship might be established through the discussion of topics which RA's find residents most frequently initiating.

Eighty-six per cent of the RA's checked that the most frequent meeting place with residents was the RA's room, indicating that residents visited RA's rooms frequently. The most frequent meetings occurred within the residence hall.

There was a wide variance of responses comparing the most valuable means of communicating ideas with residents and the

most frequently experienced means. However, there was a bare majority of agreement that most means were equally frequent and valuable. Basically, non-structured means of communicating with residents both occurred most frequently and were preferred to structured meetings, which included topics for discussion, as might typically occur in hall and corridor meetings.

The essential ideas chosen by the RA's concerning what incidents should be reported to the hall Director included: 1) reporting incidents is a matter of personal judgment of the RA; 2) major disciplinary problems and personality conflicts should be reported; 3) residents do not necessarily have to know what is discussed between the RA and Director; 4) incidents should be reported when RA's methods have failed to alleviate the problem and; 5) the Director should follow up reports made by RA's with developments, if possible, to promote the RA's feeling of usefulness.

Preferred methods of keeping in touch with residents received the highest consensus of group opinion. Speaking whenever possible and giving sincere compliments ranked highest. Calling residents by name ranked third. All choices were thoughtful and consistent with the university's standards. Another choice--taking advantage of opportunities during desk duty for making conversation--supported the value of having RA's work at the desk.

And, finally, it was inferred from the last choice that RA's thought it was hard to feel "jolly" early in the morning when everyone congregated in the bath and shower rooms. The RA's were conscious of maintaining a "jolly" disposition at these times.

In considering the best ways to promote the ideas consistent with university standards, the RA's agreed that being a good example and being a good listener were the best ways of establishing desirable behavior among residents. To consider themselves counselors and people to confide in were choices least acceptable to the RA's. This evidence seemed consistent with the objectives and standards expected by the administration.

In choosing policies to cause RA's to be available and accessible to residents, the RA's chose items which placed the responsibility upon themselves. Non-structured policies were preferred to structured systems of scheduled availability. The RA's most preferred the system of having sign-out cards and checking on RA's leaving the dormitory to determine, themselves, if the hall was adequately staffed.

The results of the last portion of the instrument concerned structured policies in a dormitory which afforded interactions between RA's and residents. It was found that RA's chose policies most frequently experienced as being the policies they would also choose as being most valuable. It was significant that agreement and an equal number of responses were consistent in all three choices of most frequent, most valuable, and least valuable items.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the whole the results compared favorably with the expected attitudes and forms of behavior recommended by the university. Several items which supported the objectives stated in the RA Manual were chosen as being valuable and essential. Results indicated that RA's desired to understand and accept residents. RA's were willing to initiate conversation and were conscious of giving compliments, greeting residents by name, and establishing an open door policy. All eleven selections in Table 5 supported the objective of understanding and accepting residents. Results from Table 3 indicated that residents visited the RA's room frequently, suggesting that good rapport had been established.

There were several items reflecting professional approaches to promoting attitudes and behaviors consistent with the standards of the university. Being a good example, being a good listener, showing respect for the Director, and stating policies and the reasons for them were some of the responses supporting this premise. The RA's also expressed good ethical standards concerning the promotion of attitudes in their selection of least valuable policies.

Being reasonably available and maintaining active relationships with residents were supported in the methods RA's chose to keep in touch with residents and their selection of policies which permit RA's to be available and accessible to residents.

Some policies designed to cause occasions for RA-resident interactions were disagreed with by the RA's. As they had the opportunity to refrain from disagreeing if they so chose, it was surprising to find the wide scattering of disagreement. Upon analysis, it was thought that the reason for the disagreement resulted from RA's not being familiar with policies outside their own dormitory.

Highest agreement occurred in the methods RA's would use to keep in touch with residents. The items chosen were familiar to RA's as they used them daily in their experiences with residents. Therefore, a high degree of consistency could be expected.

Strong group agreement appeared in the items RA's were most familiar with and more variation occurred with items not as familiar to the RA's. The implication was that RA's should become more familiar with the items and policies where a high scattering of responses were evidenced. The areas with low percentages, indicating a high scattering of responses, might be worthy of attention for possible discussion data for future RA meetings.

It is worthy to note that the results indicated that RA's desired to know residents in a personal way which contrasted with the content of the topics most frequently discussed with them in daily experience.

According to their experience, residents talked about boy-friends, what professors to take, and marriage most frequently. Yet the RA's chose the future, values and beliefs, personality problems and getting along with others, parents and family, and past life as topics they would choose to discuss with residents to establish a personal relationship. This evidence is similar to the results of the Texan study explained in Chapter II. They

found that RA's tended to be too interested in the personal life of residents and that the residents did not generally accept their interest.

The author recommends the instrument used as valuable for future use with residents, Deans, and Directors in the following ways:

- 1) For the RA's to see how their responses were recorded.
- 2) For the RA's to see how broad a few evaluative questions can become.
- 3) For the RA's to select topics which they would like to discuss.
- 4) To represent one evaluative instrument as a resource for similar studies.
- 5) To compare the tallies presented with the thoughts of new RA's or any different group of RA's.
- 6) For Directors or Deans to use as a source for discussions with residents or other staff members.
- 7) For a Dean to keep on file for reference when staff members wish to obtain similar information.

In regard to fulfilling specific hall duties, the results revealed that the RA's felt desk duty was a valuable place to initiate conversation with residents, thus supporting the policy of having RA's working at the desk.

Staffing and cooperation with the Director seemed to be the only controversial areas in fulfilling the objectives stated in the RA's manual. The RA's seemed to reject administrative systems of coverage or staffing and sought to arrange their own devices and to be primarily responsible for coverage themselves.

An attempt to afford this responsibility might be in order, but some structured system would have to be approved by the Hall Director to cover the responsibility for the matter.

On reporting incidents to the Director concerning residents, RA's tended to want to report only incidents that became serious or that they could not handle. An exchanging of ideas and discussion of the students' welfare concept was not chosen in the results. They did indicate, however, that they would like follow-up discussions of incidents they reported when feasible. Perhaps more work in exchanging ideas through discussions of actual past cases would encourage, and continually remind, RA's that a constant exchange of incidental concerns may lead to a better understanding of human development.